

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
DNRC FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ON STATE TRUST LANDS

Project Name: Deep Creek Canyon Salvage Harvest

Proposed Implementation Date: 8/13/2021

Proponent: Helena Unit, DNRC

Proposed Action: The Helena Unit of the Montana DNRC is proposing to Salvage Timber that was burned in the Deep Creek Canyon Fire or that has been impacted by western spruce budworm and Douglas-fir beetle. The Deep Creek Canyon Fire started on June 13th, 2021 and burned approximately 4648 Acres, about 300 of which were on State Trust Land. The DNRC is proposing to salvage harvest up to 108.25 acres of that land, in addition if trees are impacted by the western spruce budworm or Douglas-fir beetle will also be removed. Estimated volume to be salvaged is 230 MBF. Road maintenance, herbicide treatments, grass seeding, pile burning, and tree planting could occur. Non merchantable material will be used to create sediment traps on slopes to reduce post fire erosion. The Helena Unit is working with neighboring landowners to get salvage the wood in order minimize road construction, realize the values of the timber before it deteriorates and gain access. Implementation is expected to take 3 years to complete.

Legal Description: 7N 5E 16

County: Broadwater

Specialists Consulted: Jeff Schmalenberg, Patrick Rennie

Category (refer to ARM 36.11.447 (3)(a) through (x) for additional detail):

- a) ☐ Minor temporary uses of land involving negligible or no disturbance of soil or vegetation and having no long-term effects on the environment.
- b) ☐ Plans or modifications of plans that would not predetermine future Department action affecting the physical or biological environment.
- c) ☐ Issuance, renewal, or assignment of leases or licenses where the use will remain the same.
- d) ☐ Acquisition of fee title, easements, rights of way or other interests in land.
- e) ☒ Road maintenance and repair of existing roads.
- f) ☒ Reconstruction or modification to an existing bridges or replacement of a culvert.
- g) ☒ Crossing Class III Streams in accordance with the SMZ law.
- h) ☒ Issuing a Temporary Road Use Permits on existing roads.
- i) ☐ Road closure to motorized public and/or administrative use.
- j) ☐ Removal of material stockpiles.
- k) ☐ Backfilling into previously excavated land with compatible material.
- l) ☒ Gathering forest products for personal or commercial use i.e. firewood, Christmas trees or posts and rails.
- m) ☒ Regeneration of land through planting native trees, or other means, including site preparation, but that does not involve use of herbicides.

- n) ☐ Seed procurement, growing, lifting and distributing nursery stock.
- o) ☐ Drilling of water wells for domestic use or irrigation for lawns and gardens for existing cabin or home sites.
- p) ☒ Herbicide and pesticide treatments, using spot treatment less than 160 acres within a 640-acre section during the calendar year.
- q) ☐ Handling of hazardous materials for fire suppression or other purposes
- r) ☐ Fence construction of specific design specifications (noted in ARM).
- s) ☐ Installation of water pipelines waterlines to benefit grazing practices and range condition.
- t) ☐ Removal of trees less than two feet tall that are encroaching on range or non-commercial forest lands on up to 60 contiguous acres, not to exceed 160 acres.
- u) ☐ Removal of hazardous trees from structures, recreation areas and roads not to exceed 5,000 board feet.
- v) ☐ Cone Collection for reforestation purposes
- w) ☒ Timber Harvest (<500 MBF)
- x) ☐ Low-intensity forest management activities as defined in ARM 36.11.403(43) including: **(Please select what activity applies)**

- ☐ (a) timber inventory;
- ☒ (b) timber sale preparation;
- ☐ (c) road location;
- ☒ (d) road maintenance;
- ☐ (e) bridge replacement;
- ☐ (f) mechanical site preparation;
- ☐ (g) tree planting;
- ☐ (h) pre-commercial thinning;
- ☒ (i) prescriptive and hazard reduction burning;
- ☒ (j) patrol of fall/winter slash burns;
- ☒ (k) heavy and non-heavy equipment slash treatments;
- ☒ (l) monitoring;
- ☐ (m) data collection; and
- ☒ (n) noxious weed management.

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Trust Land Management Division has adopted the above categorical exclusions for activities conducted on state forested trust lands. "Categorical Exclusion" refers to a type of action that does not individually, collectively, or cumulatively require an EA or EIS unless extraordinary circumstances occur (ARM 36.2.522(5)).

Extraordinary Circumstances:

Will the proposed action affect one or more of the following resources, species or situations in the project area? If the resource, species, or situation is present, but project design avoids potential adverse effects on the resource, the answer is "No". One "Yes" answer indicates that Categorical Exclusion is not appropriate for the project, and an EA or EIS must be conducted.

YES

NO

☐☒

a) Sites with high erosion risk.

☐☒

b) Federally listed threatened and endangered species or critical habitat for threatened and endangered species as designated by the USFWS.

☐☒

c) Municipal watersheds.

☐☒

d) The SMZ of fish bearing streams or lakes, except for modification or replacement of bridges, culverts and other crossing structures.

☐☒

e) State natural area.

☐☒

f) Native American religious and cultural sites.

☐☒

g) Archaeological sites.

☐☒

h) Historic properties and areas.

☐☒

i) Several related projects that individually may be subject to categorical exclusion but that may occur at the same time or in the same geographic area. Such related actions may be subject to environmental review even if they are not individually subject to review.

☐☒

j) Violations of any applicable state or federal laws or regulations.

The project listed above meets the definition of the indicated categorical exclusion, including specified conditions and extraordinary circumstances, as provided in the Forest Management Rules (ARM 36.11.447).

Prepared by: Devin Healy
(Name)

8/16/2021
(Date)

Decision by:

Heidi Crum
(Name)

Helena Unit Manager
(Title)

Heidi Crum
(Signature)

8/17/21
(Date)



Deep Creek Canyon Salvage Permit Helena Unit

Attachment A-1

T7N R3E Section 16

N



